

# Michigan Child Care Matters



DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & INDUSTRY SERVICES  
Bureau of Regulatory Services  
Division of Child Day Care Licensing

SAFE ENVIRONMENT - PART I

Issue 53 Spring, 2000

## Welcome Carole Hakala Engle, Bureau of Regulatory Services Director

**T**he Division of Child Day Care Licensing is an important support to working families. As a parent, I have first hand experience with licensed child care. It is important, to me and other parents like me, that our children have a quality child care experience in a safe environment.

My expectation is that the child care providers carry out the licensing rules as the Legislature intended. As Bureau Director, my goal is to ensure that the rules are fairly and uniformly enforced and that the licensing consultants follow the mandates of Act No. 116, of the Public Acts of 1973, as amended. Licensing consultants will continue to provide one-on-one technical assistance and consultation to assist you in your efforts to provide quality child care services.

Customer service is important to the Bureau. While I am reviewing the Bureau's current array of publications, videos, lending libraries, and other resources to aid providers in the care they offer Michigan's children, I can assure you that this type of resource will continue to be available. Information about the Bureau and the Divisions can also be accessed through the Internet: [www.cis.state.mi.us/brs](http://www.cis.state.mi.us/brs). I encourage you to periodically access our web site to see what may be useful and new.

I look forward to working with the child care community.

Sincerely,

Carole Hakala Engle, Director  
Bureau of Regulatory Services

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## IT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME

Bruce Brown, Licensing Consultant  
Grand Rapids

Reprinted from Issue 8

Accidents can happen to anyone, any time, any place. There is no immunity from fires, tornadoes, electrical shock, poisonings, falls or any other accidents. These things can happen to the nicest people in the best of places. They could happen to you or a child in your care.

Thinking about the possibility of you or a child in your care being hurt is very upsetting. Such thoughts are so upsetting that we may unconsciously deny or block out the possibility. "Denial" and "blocking" are common psychological defense mechanisms we use to protect ourselves from uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately, while these defense mechanisms may protect our feelings related to possible injuries, they will not protect our children from being injured.

As a part of denying or blocking out the possibility of an accident occurring, we may make incorrect assumptions based on past experience. We may develop an attitude of believing that because it's never happened, it never will. There are many common false assumptions. Have you or anyone you know ever experienced any of these situations?

"I am always with the children, they couldn't get hurt here" . . . yet, the Poison Control Center tells us that children have swallowed poisons with their parents in the same room.

"Children know what is off-limits here" . . . yet, we know that children are curious and sometimes test limits which may lead to serious injury.

"No one's ever been hurt here, this environment is safe" . . . yet experience tells us that children have been injured in places where there has never been an accident before. Making predictions of future safety based on the past safety record may be dangerous.

Believing that an accident could happen in your home or center is the first, most important accident prevention step you will ever take! This realization

will help you to increase your awareness of potential safety problems. It will help you to take necessary action to prevent accidents from occurring.

Below are a few safety tips to consider in taking action to make your environment a safer place:

- ◆ Reduce the risk of "falls" by making sure stairs, steps, and walkways are clear of objects, are in good repair and have handrails. Indoor stairs should be protected with safe children's gates. Outdoor steps and walkways should be free of snow and ice build-up.
- ◆ Reduce the risk of choking by making sure small toys and parts are kept away from young children. Watch for and remove choking hazards such as buttons, broken crayons, jacks, safety pins, bottle caps, and uninflated balloons. Certain food items such as hard candy, peanuts, popcorn and various seeds are also choking hazards for young children.

Remember, choking **kills** more children under 6 than any other home accident.

- ◆ Reduce electric shock by covering all unused electric outlets with protective safety covers.
- ◆ Reduce injury from toys and equipment. Continually examine indoor and outdoor play equipment. Make sure equipment is in

good repair and age-appropriate.

- ◆ Know what to do in the event of an accidental injury.
- ◆ Provide training to staff in CPR and First Aid.
- ◆ Have all emergency numbers including the poison control center posted at your telephone.
- ◆ Always use proper seat and child restraints while transporting children.
- ◆ Thoroughly child-proof your play environment. Remove and secure all hazardous items out of reach of even the most ingenious child.



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# A World Full of Guns

Reviewed by  
Sandy Rademacher, Licensing Consultant  
Genesee County

How do we protect our children from guns? In



May of 1999, ABC'S 20/20 aired a program entitled "A World Full of Guns." The presentation included a dramatic investigation and experiment involving children and guns.

Some of the latest statistics by legislative gun control advocates state:

- ◆ There are an estimated 250 million guns in the U.S., enough for every man, woman, and child.
- ◆ Every other day at least one child is killed in an accidental shooting.
- ◆ More children are killed by guns annually than police officers are killed in the line of duty.
- ◆ If you have a gun in your home, it is 23 times more likely that it will kill a member of your family or a friend.
- ◆ Even though 16 states have criminal penalties for leaving guns where children can get to them, prosecutions are rare.

Do parents really know how many close encounters their children have with guns? During the 20/20 investigation, a number of children from Boy's & Girls Club's, YMCA's and community center programs were interviewed on film as to whether or not they knew where the guns in their homes were located. The parents of these children during taped interviews stated they were certain that their children did not know where the guns were in their homes. They were confident their children weren't interested enough or couldn't reach them if they tried. An astounding number of these children knew exactly where they could be found, and could retrieve them, as well as the ammunition, if they wanted to or needed to.

In most every case involving a child death related to accidental gun firing, it was found these guns were unlocked and fully loaded, and yet parents still believed their children didn't know where the guns were.

Some children stated that they knew how to load the guns by "watching it on television."

What about the guns next door or in the homes where your children might play? Parents in the study said they never asked about guns in other people's homes, but were certain their children would tell them if they ever saw one. A parent of a 10 year old stated she positively knew her child would never touch a gun in another person's home. While watching her child over closed circuit television, the child told 20/20 interviewers how his neighbor showed him his gun and even told him how to load and shoot it. Other children told of their playmates getting out guns to "show off." How can we afford to be so careless and simply underestimate children's curiosity and the powerful attraction to guns?

Gun enthusiasts and the National Rifle Association (NRA) experts claim accidents happen because children are not educated about and taught the proper respect for guns. Dr. Marjorie Hardy, assistant professor of psychology at Allentown College in Pennsylvania has done numerous studies on children and guns. With her help and advice, 20/20 set up an experiment in an Allentown day care center, with stunning results.

Forty children ages 3-10 years old and their parents were selected for the study. Twenty of the children were lectured by the local police department about gun safety and shown an animated video of the NRA's "Eddie Eagle" program which is presented in schools and community programs across the country promoting gun safety. As Eddie educates the children about the dangers of guns, his repeated message to children is: **STOP! DON'T TOUCH! LEAVE THE AREA! TELL AN ADULT!**

Four days after the lecture, a day care center playroom was rigged with 3 video cameras and 3 handguns, somewhat hidden from plain sight in the room among the toys and games. Both the lectured and non-lectured children were placed in the room in pairs. Within minutes all the children had discovered the guns. Almost all of the children could tell the guns were real. The hidden cameras revealed children picking them up, looking down the barrels, pulling the triggers, and then the shooting began. Dramatic enactments of gun fights, chase-n-shoot, playing dead and even calling 911 after the shots were fired graced the screen. Only three children did what they were told, and called an adult. Gender did not appear to make a significant difference in the enactment with the younger children. Parents watching

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## “Kpow! Kpow! You’re Dead!”

Mary Pat Jennings, Licensing Consultant  
Mt. Pleasant

Judy Levine, Area Manager  
Ingham County

“Kpow! Kpow! You’re dead!” Jimmy, finger extended, chased his best friend across the classroom. The teacher intervened saying, “You can pretend lots of different things to do or be, but please don’t pretend to shoot at each other. Real guns can hurt or kill people.”

Although dramatic play involving weapons is discouraged in most day care environments, preventing all pretend gun play is nearly impossible. Many little boys (and some girls) have occasional make-believe gun battles. Even when toy guns are not allowed in a program, children often substitute blocks or other toys for weapons, or create them from Legos or art materials.

Recent incidents of real gun violence involving young children underline the importance of talking to children about guns, real and pretend. Although preschool children are just beginning to distinguish between fantasy and reality, it is not too early to talk about the difference between real, toy and pretend guns. It is also appropriate to discuss why pretending race cars, cooking in the kitchen or running a store are allowed in child care, but pretend killing and toy weapons are not. Finally, it is sadly necessary to talk to children about what *dead* means.

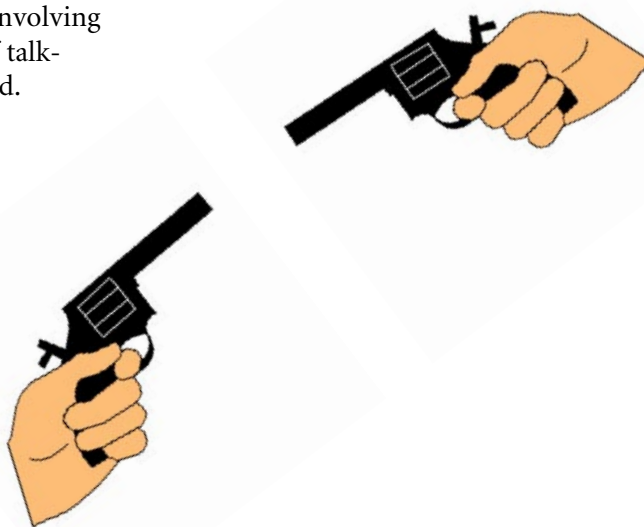
Some practical strategies for the day care provider to use with children and families include:

- ♦ Teaching children and adults about peace-making and giving them non-violent options for problem solving.
- ♦ Having a **no weapons** policy at day care.
- ♦ Avoiding videos or computer games that portray violence or encourage children to shoot at people.
- ♦ Giving children an acceptable alternative such as a bulls-eye target to aim at.
- ♦ Using instances of play with pretend guns as an opportunity to discuss feelings about and experiences with real or media gun violence.
- ♦ Teaching children that real guns can hurt or

kill people and what it means to be dead. Do this by discussing what it means to be alive. Read children’s books about death.

- ♦ Teaching children to tell an adult if they see or hear that someone has a weapon.
- ♦ Educating parents to understand that children are observant and do know where the weapons and ammunition are kept and how to use them.
- ♦ Preparing staff and children in the event that an attack is made in the child care setting, whether from an outside or inside source.

Remember that although the problem of violence involving young children seems overwhelming and incomprehensible, even the small things we do can help to stop the violence. ❖




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### A World Full of Guns (Continued from page 3)

were devastated, shocked and scared. The police officers watching were dismayed and dumbfounded, knowing their educational efforts did little to help children resist their fascination with guns.

What do we do? 20/20’s Diane Sawyer firmly believes in the long term, our nation needs to decide how much we are going to expose children to violence. The short term goals must be decided by parents and care givers. We need to ask ourselves, how safe are the guns in our homes? ❖

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# Tornado Season Upon Us

Diane Gillham, Licensing Consultant  
Traverse City

Some people consider April to September the best months to enjoy Michigan weather. This is also the prime period when tornadoes are most likely to occur in our state.

Child day care licensing rules require both day care homes and centers to develop a written emergency plan, including a diagram of the escape route and safe haven, in case of a tornado. All staff need to know the difference between a **tornado watch** (conditions exist that could lead to a tornado - be prepared to take shelter - stay tuned to your local radio station for updates) and a **tornado warning** (a tornado has been sighted in the area - take shelter immediately).

Emergency plans should include the following:

- ◆ How you will know there is a tornado watch or warning, (radio, TV, weather radio).
- ◆ Safe shelter area.
- ◆ Duties of all staff and volunteers present.
- ◆ Procedures children are to follow.

The shelter area should provide at least six square feet per adult and an appropriate comparable amount of space for the licensed capacity of the facility. It needs to be located in the lowest interior section of the building with supporting walls, away from windows and glass.

It is never safe to stay in a mobile home during a tornado emergency. Air will circulate underneath the mobile home and move upward, causing it to rise off the ground. Arrangements need to be made to use a

safe shelter in a nearby building such as community building, school, a neighbor's house, or a store. Plan to move to this area during a tornado watch to allow adequate time for everyone to safely reach the shelter.

Rooms with a wide free-span roof, such as a gymnasium, auditorium, or church may not be safe. This type of roof may collapse during a tornado.

Post your written plan and diagram in a prominent place. Review the plan with caregivers. Practice a tornado drill at least once during tornado season and keep a written record of the drill.

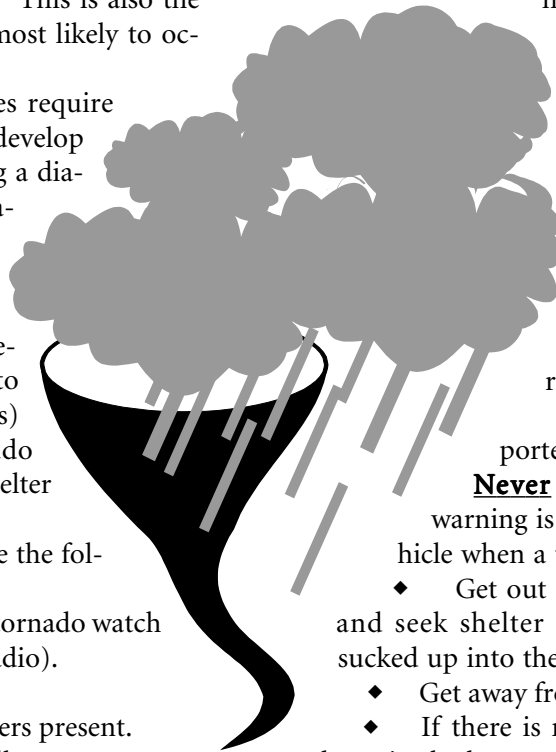
Children may be transported during a tornado watch.

**Never** transport once a tornado warning is issued. If you are in a vehicle when a tornado warning sounds:

- ◆ Get out of the vehicle immediately and seek shelter as it, too, could become sucked up into the tornado.
- ◆ Get away from the vehicle.
- ◆ If there is no building for shelter, lie down in the lowest spot available.

For additional information or guidance in choosing a shelter area, you may want to contact any of these agencies:

- ◆ American Red Cross ([www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org))
- ◆ Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) ([www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov))
- ◆ Local Emergency Management Coordinators ([www.mspemd.org](http://www.mspemd.org)) ❖



This publication provides topical information regarding young children who are cared for in licensed child care settings. We encourage child care providers to make this publication available to parents of children in care, or to provide them with the web address so they may receive their own copy. Issue 43 and beyond are available on the internet. **This document is in the public domain and we encourage reprinting.**

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## PLAYGROUND SAFETY INSIGHTS... BECAUSE KIDS ARE WORTH IT!

*Judy Acker-Smith,*

*National Certified Playground Safety Inspector,*

*Playground Safety Insights*

*Member of the Kalamazoo County SAFE KIDS Coalition*

Ask children what their favorite part of the school day is and the overwhelming majority will answer "Recess!" Children eagerly look forward to playing, socializing with their friends or simply taking a break from sitting quietly.



For over 200,000 children a year, a fun-filled time at the playground abruptly ends with a serious injury and a painful trip to the emergency room. Nationwide, **one child every 2.5 minutes** requires emergency room care for a playground injury, resulting in death for an average of 17 children each year. Playground injuries are the leading cause of injury to children in the day care setting and to children ages 5-14 in the school environment. Most parents are totally unaware of these heartbreaking statistics until their child, or a child they know, is seriously hurt or killed on a playground.

For 18 years, we've had the knowledge to prevent the majority of playground injuries from occurring, yet it has taken the threat of personal injury lawsuits to finally instill the importance of safe playgrounds. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Guidelines and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standard F1487-95 are considered the "standard of care" for playgrounds. Although both are voluntary, they are consistently cited in playground injury litigation.

Spurred by the tragic death of 5 year old Nancy Sibley, Michigan is one of only a few states to enact playground safety legislation. The **Playground Equipment Safety Act** took effect May 1, 1998, and requires that **new playgrounds** be manufactured and installed to comply with CPSC and ASTM. Owners are also responsible for maintenance and repair, with violations resulting in fines up to \$10,000. **This law does not cover existing playgrounds.** To date, Cali-

fornia is the only state to require inspections and compliance with safety standards by January 1, 2000 for **all playgrounds**. Consequently, in Michigan the responsibility for providing safe, existing playgrounds lies with child care providers, school officials and park departments.

Following these safety guidelines will help to prevent unnecessary playground tragedies:

**Surfacing** is the most critical safety factor, because 70% of injuries are caused by falls to the surface. Falling only a few feet onto asphalt, concrete, grass or hard-packed dirt can cause a life-threatening injury. Although it is impossible to prevent all falls, providing a shock-absorbing surface such as pea gravel, wood chips/fiber, sand or rubber will lessen the impact. Loose fill materials should be contained and maintained at a depth of 9-12 inches. The thickness of rubber surfacing (tiles or poured in place) should be proportionate to the height of equipment.

**The Use Zone**, which is the area under and around equipment where a child may fall, should be covered with protective surfacing according to the following dimensions:

- ◆ Climbers...6 feet in all directions
- ◆ Slides...6 feet to the sides and rear; height of the slide plus 4 feet at slide exit
- ◆ To-fro swings...2 times the height of the top rail to both the front and rear; 6 feet on sides
- ◆ Tot swings...2 times the distance between top rail and seating surface to both front and rear; 6 feet on sides
- ◆ Tire swings...distance between pivot point and top of tire, plus 6 feet in all directions
- ◆ Spring toys...6 feet in all directions.
- ◆ Maintain a minimum of 6 feet between stationary equipment that is 30" or less in height.

**Entanglement**, causing strangulation, accounts for 49% of playground fatalities. An entangled child can become unconscious in 15 seconds and death may occur in as little as 3 minutes. It is crucial to eliminate drawstrings on clothing and to check for areas where entanglement may occur, such as:

- ◆ Gaps between the slide, slide platform and slide hood
- ◆ Open "S" hooks
- ◆ Bolts that protrude more than 2 threads or bolts that form a hook
- ◆ Angles less than 55 degrees

**Entrapment**, causing strangulation, may occur in openings where a child's body can fit but the head becomes entrapped. All openings should be less than

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3.5 inches or more than 9 inches. Check spaces between:

- ◆ Vertical and horizontal rungs
- ◆ Steps
- ◆ Platforms
- ◆ Handrails

**Impact from moving equipment**, such as swings, can cause severe injury and death. Suggestions for swing safety include:

- ◆ Locate swings on perimeter of playground away from other equipment
- ◆ Do not attach to-fro and tire swings to a composite structure.
- ◆ Remove all heavy animal swings and wood or metal swing seats. Replace with lightweight, sling type seats.
- ◆ Hang no more than 2 swings in each bay. To-fro and tot swings should be in separate bays.
- ◆ Maintain a minimum of 24" between each swing and a minimum of 30" between the swing and support post.
- ◆ Hang only 1 tire swing per bay. Tire swings require a minimum clearance between the swing and support post of the length of the swing chain plus 30 inches.

**Equipment not recommended** for public playgrounds includes:

- ◆ Trapeze bars
- ◆ Swinging gates and doors
- ◆ Dual exercise rings with long chains
- ◆ Rope swings

**Age-appropriate equipment** should be separated for children ages 2-5 and 5-12.

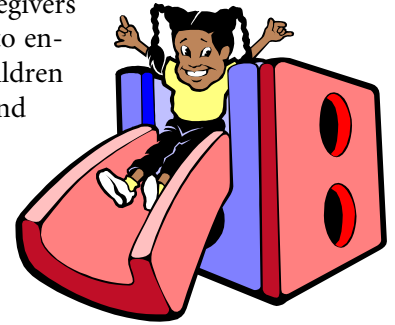
**Supervision** on all playgrounds is essential, even on home playgrounds in a fenced yard. An alarming 67% of playground deaths occur in the backyard!

Tips for supervision include:

- ◆ Make sure children play on age-appropriate equipment and stay off unsafe equipment.
- ◆ Be aware of potential hazards such as exposed cement footings, sharp metal edges and improper surfacing.
- ◆ Be prepared to dispose of broken glass, garbage, and other potential hazards prior to children's use.
- ◆ Establish 5 rules of safe play with children's input. Consistently review and enforce.
- ◆ Proximity and eye contact are often all it takes to ensure safe play.
- ◆ Intervene to resolve conflicts or address a safety concern.
- ◆ Develop a plan of action in case of injury.

**The first step** toward safer playgrounds is a thorough inspection by a professional Certified Playground Safety Inspector, who will identify and prioritize hazards. Immediate attention should be given to those hazards that pose a potential life-threatening injury. Establishing a plan of action is imperative, especially when funding is limited.

**Playground accidents** can happen to any child, anywhere and at any time. Fortunately, we know how to prevent many accidents. As parents, teachers, and caregivers it is **OUR** responsibility to ensure that our treasured children have a safe place to play, and only fun-filled memories of "Recess!" ❖



To order free CPSC publications #321, #325 and #327, send your name and address to:

CPSC Publication Request  
Washington, DC 20207

For more information call the National Program for Playground Safety: **1-800-544-PLAY**

**Editors Note:** *The information presented in this article is consultative in nature and does not reflect the rule requirements for child care centers or day care homes.*

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## Click It or Ticket!

In 1999, Governor John Engler signed Public Act 29 that strengthens Michigan's safety belt law and allows police officers to stop a vehicle if they observe the driver or front seat passenger not wearing a safety belt, or, not properly restraining a child. This new Primary (standard) safety belt law took effect March 10, 2000. This law:

1. Allows police officers to stop a motorist solely for not wearing a safety belt in the front seat of a vehicle.
2. Allows police officers to stop a motorist if a child age 4 through 15 is not properly restrained, no matter where they are riding in a vehicle.
3. Improves child passenger protection by requiring all children under the age of 4 to be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat. ❖

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## Water Hazards/Water Activities in Family and Group Day Care Homes

Ann Gunia, Licensing Consultant  
Kalamazoo County

As we approach the summer months, it's always a good idea to review with home day care providers the department's policy regarding water hazards and water activities. First of all, a water hazard is defined as any area where water accumulates to a level in which a child can drown. And let's all remember, a child can drown in an little as 2 or 3 inches of water in less time than it takes to answer a phone call.

Some examples of water hazards include: all swimming and wading pools, ponds, streams, lakes, canals, ditches, drains, rivers, uncovered wells, hot tubs or spas. Even toilets, bathtubs and buckets of water can be a hazard to young children without diligent supervision from you.

**Let's answer some of your frequently asked questions about water hazards and water activities.**

**Q:** *I live near a lake. Do I need a fence?*

**A:** If the children's play area is within 200 feet of the water hazard, yes, some type of barrier will be required. Your best solution may be to fence in your play area with fencing at least 4 feet high and a gate that can locked. As each situation is different, we recommend you check with your licensing consultant.

**Q:** *I have an above ground pool. Can I count the walls of the pool to act as the barrier?*

**A:** Maybe. If the walls of the pool are at least 4 feet high at every point around the pool at ground level, yes, you would be able to count the wall itself as a barrier. But remember, you must also remove or make inaccessible the steps or stairs leading up to the pool so children cannot access the water that way. Also, if the pump mechanism or other yard equipment could provide a means for children to climb into the pool, those would have to be protected, too.

**Q:** *What type of barrier do I need for my hot tub?*

**A:** First of all, heated hot tubs/spas are prohibited for use by day care children, and use of jets in unheated hot tubs/spas is also prohibited. A hard cover must be installed on every hot tub/spa and it must be locked at all times children are in care. In addition, a self-closing and locking device must be

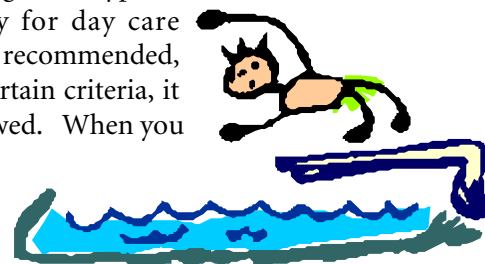
installed on the doors that lead directly to the hot tub/spa.

**Q:** *My back yard is totally fenced because I have an inground pool. Do I need to do anything else?*

**A:** You need to either designate a safe play area for children outside of the fenced back yard or fence in a separate play area in the back yard at least 400 square feet in size. Check to make sure the fence around your yard is at least 4 feet high. Is it free of any openings a child can get through? Can a child readily climb the fence or access the yard any other way? Make sure the lock you have on your gate cannot be opened by children. If there are any doors from your home leading into the fenced pool area, these doors must be equipped with locks that children cannot open and kept locked during day care hours. A door alarm system is advised. A pool alarm that alerts you to anything in the water is also a good idea.

**Q:** *I want to use my inground pool for the day care children. Is this allowed?*

**A:** Although this type of water activity for day care children is not recommended, if you meet certain criteria, it would be allowed. When you use a swimming pool (lake, pond, river) as part of your



program, you will be expected to provide direct adult supervision to children at all times. This means:

- Never leave children in a water activity area without an adult caregiver or adult assistant caregiver.
- Pay attention to children at all times. Use the telephone for emergencies only.
- Be out of the water so you can see every child. If you have a second caregiver she can be in the water as long as an adult is out of the water supervising.
- Have another assistant caregiver with the children who are not participating in the water activity.
- Make sure the ratio rule (R400.1803) is followed in the water area in addition to other areas where there are children.
- You may need to limit the number of children in the water at any one time based on the ages of children, number of non-swimmers and special needs of individual children.

Besides providing direct supervision, you must also do the following:

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- Check the water activity area for general safety.
- Have a CPR trained adult supervising children in the water activity area.
- Teach children rules for behavior in and around the water activity.
- Get written permission from the parents for children to participate.
- Have a telephone for emergency use available without leaving the water activity area, or if you are away from home participating in a water activity, know where a working telephone is located.
- Have a reach pole or alternative available.
- Use diving boards and water slides with caution.
- Use inflatable toys and rings for play only, not to replace supervision or emergency devices.
- Test water quality regularly in swimming pools and use chemicals according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Include in your overall serious accident or injury plan what you would do if a child is injured in the water and/or does not come up to the surface and/or looks like the child has drowned.
- Make sure the water activity area is safe and suitable for children. How deep is it? Is there a drop off?

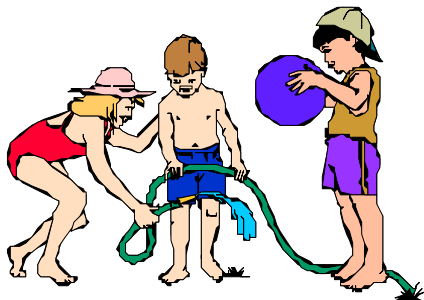
**Q:** *Are small wading pools allowed?*

**A:** Although the use of wading pools in day care homes is not recommended, they are allowed under the following conditions:

- A CPR trained adult must be on site.
- Wading pools must be emptied after the last play period of the day or more often if they become contaminated.

It is important to note that just last year several children became seriously ill from *E. coli* bacteria after playing in a contaminated wading pool.

**Q:** *If I don't use a wading pool or swimming pool, what can I do with children on a hot summer day when we want to cool off?*



**A:** Hoses and sprinklers can be great fun. How about having plastic dishpans available for the children to fill with water from the hose and various empty plastic containers children can use to fill, pour, dump and float? Remember, children don't have to be **in** the water to have fun **with** water.

Everyone will have a fun, safe summer if you keep in mind that appropriate supervision must always be maintained but especially when a water hazard is present. Enjoy! ❖



## Resources: Safe Environment I

ABC News Home Video, "20/20 - A World Full of Guns", 05/21/99 Segment One, T990521. (www.abcnews.com).

Consumer Product Safety Division. 4330 E. West Highway, Room 504, Bethesda, MD 20814. (www.cpsc.gov).

Crime Prevention Tips from National Crime Prevention Council, 1700 K Street NW, Second Floor, Washington, DC 20006-3817.

"Dealing With Gun Violence", Michigan State Police, Prevention Services Section, Lansing, MI 48823. (www.msp.state.mi.us).

Farm Safety 4 Just Kids. 110 S. Chestnut Ave., P. O. Box 458, Earlham, IA 50072.

National Program for Playground Safety. University of Northern Iowa. School for Health, Physical Education and Leisure Services. Cedar Falls, IA 50614-0618

First Alert and McDonald's present "Plan to Get Out Alive", Family Fire Safety Video, produced and developed by WCBS-New York, 1988.

## “Teacher! Who’s That Man?”

Mary Pat Jennings, Licensing Consultant  
Patricia Hogg, Administrative Assistant



*“I want some money, I’m hungry!” said the big scruffy man who walked into our preschool class. My assistant and I were alone in the building with 18 children and his unexpected presence and demeanor made us a bit nervous. We offered to share our snack with him but he said, “No! I want money!” We did not want to be rude or unsympathetic, but we also had to consider the safety of the children in our care.*

This situation could occur in any facility, but preschools and day care centers which use space in churches may experience it more often. The ministry of many religious organizations includes providing aid for the needy and homeless, so occasional visitors in need of help may turn up. However, there is always the possibility that a person could be dangerous or disruptive enough to frighten the children (let alone the adults).

We had all the required emergency plans for fire, tornado, accidents and injuries but we had never thought about this type of situation! **We needed to have a plan!**

First, it was necessary to have the church administration identify who we could call when someone came into the building requesting help. These contact people and their phone numbers needed to be added to the emergency telephone list. We asked the church to consider whether their staff could coordinate their work schedules with day care hours so that

there would be another person on site. Would it be possible to lock the building during day care hours and, if not, could a door alarm system be installed? Could law enforcement officials be informed that a day care program was housed in the building and could officers drive by the premises on their daily rounds?

It was also important to designate staff duties as we had in other emergency plans. Who would stay with the children and, if necessary, take them to a safe place? Who would talk with unexpected visitors? Who would make phone calls? Under what circumstances should law enforcement be called?

If you have an unexpected visitor to your program:

- ◆ Assess the situation each time there is an unexpected visitor.
- ◆ Remain calm, do not assume anything.
- ◆ Present yourself as someone who is calm, assured, knowledgeable, and helpful to assist in keeping the situation under control.
- ◆ Follow your plan!

Unexpected intrusions into a day care program are frightening. Have a plan; train your staff; know your contact people and their phone numbers; keep the children in their regular routine; and have a good idea of what you will say to the intruder. **Being prepared will help you to handle the situation with confidence and authority.** ❖

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### It Won’t Happen To Me (Continued from page 2)

- ◆ Use fencing to protect children from things that might hurt them (e.g. pools, ponds, traffic, animals, tools, and heavy machinery).
- ◆ Provide responsible, direct supervision for children in your care; always know where children are and what they are doing.
- ◆ Teach children about safety and accident prevention. Help them to be alert and avoid hazards. Praise children for their safe behavior (e.g. using handrails, using play equipment properly, etc.)

Remember, accidents can happen to anyone, at any time, at any place. The best defense against accidental injuries will be the action you take to prevent them. ❖



## News From FIA

To comply with federal rules, beginning January 1, 2000, payments made to you for child care by the Family Independence Agency will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These payments will be reported as "Nonemployee compensation."

This reporting will be done in January 2001. A copy of the IRS form 1099-MISC will be mailed to you at the same time.

The IRS may impose a negligence penalty or other sanction if you do not report the income and are required to file an income tax return.

### FIA Payment Control Information

**DEADLINES EXPLAINED** - FIA Payment Control receives and processes about 10,000 day care billing forms every Pay Period. These weekly "deadlines" are actually cut-off points to allow us enough time to process and encode information from the forms into the payroll system by the end of each week. Day Care Center and Group Home providers may submit state subsidy billings anytime up to one year **after** care is provided, so billings need not be sent immediately following the end of each pay period. Providers are encouraged to take sufficient time to fill out their billing forms correctly, and mail them during the first week after the pay period ends. The form then will be processed during the alternate payroll week. After a one-week delay the first time, payments should arrive every two weeks thereafter.

**USE FIRST CLASS POSTAGE** - It's cheaper, and forms will generally reach us faster. "Overnight" and "Special Delivery" cost more and do not come directly to our location, but are sent to a Department of Management and Budget facility first - delaying them one day or more. Forms mailed First Class from a Post Office (rather than from a home mailbox) usually reach Payment Control in one day from most locations in the Lower Peninsula. Forms mailed from far northern Michigan (including the Upper Peninsula) usually take two days to reach FIA Payment Control.

**COMMON BILLING ERRORS** - Mistakes slow

down the payment process, and can cause mispayments or payment in some cases. Please fill out the forms carefully, completely, accurately and *legibly*. Please pay particular attention to the items which cause most of the errors we see: **Provider ID number, dates and pay period number, child ID and Case numbers, daily hours, total hours, charge for care, and signature. Hand-written information MUST BE READABLE.**

**NO FAXES PLEASE!** - The quality of facsimile machines varies widely, but too often day care billing forms faxed to FIA Payment Control are simply unreadable. When the forms are difficult to read, the people who encode the data to create pay warrants sometimes enter wrong numbers resulting in payment errors. Problems can sometimes take weeks to resolve because some of the information is not legible. We do NOT accept billings forms faxed to us for payment processing.

### 2000 Child Day Care Payment Schedule

<i>Pay Period Dates</i>	<i>Pay Period Number</i>	<i>Billing Due 5pm</i>	<i>Tentative Pay Date</i>
6/4-6/17/00	<b>013</b>	6/20	6/29
6/18-7/1/00	<b>014</b>	7/3(Monday)	7/13
7/2-7/15/00	<b>015</b>	7/18	7/27
7/16-7/29/00	<b>016</b>	8/1	8/10
7/30-8/12/00	<b>017</b>	8/15	8/24
8/13-8/26/00	<b>018</b>	8/29	9/7
8/27-9/9/00	<b>019</b>	9/12	9/21
9/10-9/23/00	<b>020</b>	9/26	10/5
9/24-10/7/00	<b>021</b>	10/10	10/19
10/8-10/21/00	<b>022</b>	10/24	11/2
10/22-11/4/00	<b>023</b>	11/7	11/16
11/5-11/18/00	<b>024</b>	11/20(Monday)	11/30
11/19-12/2/00	<b>025</b>	12/5	12/14
12/3-12/16/00	<b>026</b>	12/19	12/28
12/17-12/30/00	<b>027</b>	1/2	1/11

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## From the Division Director

I have written, cajoled, encouraged and expected that children in care be properly supervised. At the absolute minimum, parents of children in care should be assured that their child care provider knows where their child is at all times. Children have wandered away from child care settings, been left behind on field trips, and have died because of a lapse in attention to the supervision of children in care.

A child is not to be left alone or unsupervised while in the care of a child care program even when the child is sleeping or in a fenced in area. Caregivers should not be on one floor when children are on another. Children who are supposedly sleeping may awaken and be in need of adult attention or intervention. In the event of a fire, caregivers separated from children by stairs may be blocked from reaching the

children because of smoke build-up.

Staff training is a must regarding supervision policies and expectations. Because of staff turnover, reviewing and emphasizing the importance of supervision of children with new employees must be built into all new staff orientation and training programs. Planning must include advanced assignments to maintain appropriate staffing. Child/staff ratios need to be adhered to at all times for appropriate supervision of children.

The importance of supervision cannot be minimized. Attention to supervision will go a long way in preventing accidents, injuries, and deaths from occurring. In so doing, the legal mandate to "provide for the protection" of children in child care will more readily be met.

Ted deWolf, Director  
Child Day Care Licensing Division

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**“Professional Development”**  
**A Survey for Child Care Providers and Caregivers**

Your thoughts and ideas are needed. The purpose of this survey is to determine whether technology can be used as a way to communicate with you on issues related to training and learning for adults working with children.

A group of interested people across Michigan from early childhood programs and child care have formed a consortium. They are working together to develop a voluntary system of training and learning for professional development.

The consortium would like to seek your input at key times in its planning. We would appreciate you taking a few minutes during the next two weeks to complete the survey on the back of this page, and return it.

Thank you for the information you can provide. Please return the survey to the address below by:

- removing the completed survey from your Michigan Child Care Matters issue
- folding it in half
- taping it on the lower edge to create a self mailer

TO: Lifelong Education  
7 Human Ecology  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824-1030

**“PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SURVEY”****General Information****A. Where do you work with children?**

- A1. ☐ In a Family Day Care Home  
 A2. ☐ In a Group Day Care Home  
 A3. ☐ In a Full Day Care Center  
 A4. ☐ In a Half Day Care Center/Preschool  
 A5. ☐ In a Before & After School Center

**B. What is your primary role in the children's program?**

- B1. ☐ Home Day Care Provider  
 B2. ☐ Center Licensee  
 B3. ☐ Assistant Caregiver  
 B4. ☐ Classroom Teacher  
 B5. ☐ Center Program Director  
 B6. ☐ Facility Administrator/Coordinator  
 B7. ☐ Facility Support Staff

**C. From what agencies/organizations/sources have you received training? (Check 1 or more)**

- C1. ☐ Local 4C Agency  
 C2. ☐ MSU Extension Service  
 C3. ☐ Local Public School  
 C4. ☐ Local Community College  
 C5. ☐ University  
 C6. ☐ Television (e.g. PBS station)  
 C7. ☐ On-Line Internet Training  
 C8. ☐ Local or State Child Care Provider Assoc.  
 C9. ☐ State Professional Association (e.g. Head Start, MiAEYC, MCCN)  
 C10. ☐ Child Care Food Program  
 C11. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Use of Public Broadcasting Television (PBS)**

D. Do you watch PBS, in addition to cable or commercial television?

- D1. ☐ Yes  
 D2. ☐ No

E. If yes, have you and/or the children in your care watched PBS:

- E1. ☐ Adult Programs  
 E2. ☐ Children's Programs  
 E3. ☐ "Ready to Learn" Series  
 E4. ☐ "The Whole Child" Training Series

F. Would you be interested in receiving child care training and professional development through PBS in your home/center?

- F1. ☐ Yes  
 F2. ☐ No

**Use of Technology****G. Do you use a computer?**

- G1. ☐ Yes  
 G2. ☐ No

**H. Do you have access to the Internet?**

- H1. ☐ Yes  
 H2. ☐ No

**I. If you don't use a computer, were you aware that most public libraries have computers for your use?**

- I1. ☐ Yes  
 I2. ☐ No

**J. If you use a computer, which of the following ways do you use it? Check one or more.**

- J1. ☐ Word Processing  
 J2. ☐ Playing Games  
 J3. ☐ Receiving/Sending E-Mail  
 J4. ☐ Searching the Internet for Information  
 J5. ☐ Talking in Chat Rooms  
 J6. ☐ Going to Favorite Sites on the Internet  
 J7. ☐ Doing Budgeting/Taxes or other special programs  
 J8. ☐ Shopping on the Internet  
 J9. ☐ On-Line Training

**Professional Development Consortium****K. Would you be interested in being updated about the Consortium's work?**

- K1. ☐ Yes  
 K2. ☐ No

**M. Would you be willing to give your input and ideas on Consortium issues and draft proposals related to professional development?**

- M1. ☐ Yes  
 M2. ☐ No

If yes to questions K or M above, please give us your:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_